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Magic Fire Goukas and Sentinel Misses the Story - Ben Chapman Obit

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE
July 14, 1993

After a few weeks to digest and contemplate the events surrounding the Orlando Magic, the picture remains partly cloudy. The one thing we know for sure is that the local newspaper completely and totally failed. The Orlando Sentinel has two reporters assigned full time to cover the Orlando Magic, and several of their other reporters and columnists pride themselves on being well connected into the local sports scene. It is interesting then that it was ESPN in Hartford, Connecticut, rather than the local paper which broke the story that Matt Goukas was pushed or jumped up the stairs at One Magic Place.

If this performance wasn't sorry enough, Larry Guest compounded the humiliation of the sports staff at The Sentinel, by writing an embarrassing column whining that the Magic front office is full of liars and so what's a reporter to do! Guest knows as well as anyone that the truth is often withheld from reporters until the time for release is deemed proper. Good reporters get the story anyway. If the Sentinel squad was getting denials from the Magic front office, then why not report the denials along with the speculation. This is a major league town, and it needs more than minor league reporting.

One other note on the Goukas story. Anfernee Hardaway was interviewed on the national radio coverage of the draft, and said that when he visited Orlando for his two workouts, one of which was several weeks before the draft, he barely saw Goukas at all. Hardaway spent about five minutes with Goukas on each visit, and spent most of his time in Orlando with Brian Hill. This would indicate that the Goukas decision was not made a week before the draft, as the Magic claim. To my knowledge no one in the local media has followed up on Hardaway's comments, and questioned the official Magic story.

As to the draft itself, time will tell. Certainly Goukas moving into a backup role for Goose Givens is connected to the draft surprise. And it seems likely if Hardaway doesn't work out, it will be "76ers Redux" for Pat Williams. It certainly is strange that after a full season of talking about how much they needed a power forward, and how much they coveted someone like Chris Webber, the Magic would virtually give away the number one pick for a player who was going to be no higher than the number four pick. For now all we know is that we shouldn't hold our breath

waiting for the sports reporters at The Orlando Sentinel to get the full story for us.

Another death in baseball is worth noting, that of Ben Chapman who died a little over a week ago. Chapman was an all-star outfielder for the Yankees in the 1930s. As manager of the Philadelphia Phillies in 1947 Chapman led his team in their vicious racist attacks on Jackie Robinson. Chapman's verbal abuse of Robinson was reputed to be the worst in baseball, and Chapman was reprimanded by the Commissioner. After Branch Rickey gave Robinson the green light to fight back, Robinson told Chapman that if he heard another word out of him he would beat the shit out of him. Ben Chapman, dead at 84, a player to be remembered.

In another baseball mind bender, chewing tobacco was banned in all of the minor leagues. Organized baseball whose lifeblood is beer sponsorship is worried about giving a bad example to the kiddies with smokeless tobacco. The owners can't control the major league players, so they put this bad trip on the minor leaguers who have no union to protect them from the silliness and capriciousness of owners. Ho-lee-cow! I'm a Bud Man and Cub Fan, but I don't chew boys and girls.

Also on the cutting edge of silliness Richard Lapchick announced that The Institute for the Study of Sport and Society had awarded a grade of A to the NBA for their hiring practices. The laughing over this decision is only exceeded by the gasps of disbelief. No one can understand what Lapchick's organization could possibly be looking at, unless there is some other NBA that we don't know about. The hope is that this grade inflation isn't contagious, and that it has nothing to do with the fact that the Institute and the NBA have a close working and financial relationship.

"Rookie of the Year," a new summer film has arrived, and although it is billed as a kid's movie, it sounds to me like magical realism for veteran Cub fans. Let's face it, a twelve year old with a magic arm and a 105 mph fastball may be the only way the Cubs will ever win a World Series.

13% of female executives and 11% of male executives think golf is more important than sex. That must explain why they call it the Board Room.

And finally, don't look now, but with the hockey and basketball playoffs having just ended, the NFL training camps open this

week. The first exhibition games are only two weeks away.
Doesn't that make you nauseous!

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you
don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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